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ABSTRACT

This report describes the methodology and summarizes the findings from field research conducted in four school districts during 1978-79 on in-school alternatives to suspension programs. Data were collected on program history, philosophy, structure, operational characteristics, student characteristics, and program impact. Methods used included open-ended interviews with program staff, administrators, parents, and teachers; direct observation; and a review of student record data for the 1977-78 school year. Findings indicated that no one successful or generic model for an in-school suspension program exists and that districts with such programs will continue to suspend students out of school. Also, no clear or consistent pattern or association exists between membership in a program and race, sex, grade level, or conduct marks. Recommended for further study are the processes for increasing the meaningful involvement of parents in school discipline and suspension, and the processes for assisting teachers to deal more creatively with discipline-related problems. (Author/LD)

JWK INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

IN-SCHOOL ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSIONS: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF FOUR SITES

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INTRODUCTION

This study is a follow-up to an April 1978 NIE sponsored conference on in-school alternatives to out of school student suspension. Attending that three day meeting were over 600 educators, parents, lawyers, social scientists, student advocates and interested citizens. This participation, well in excess of NIE expectations, attested to the growing concern of a wide range of individuals over the increasing incidence of out of school suspensions, particularly among non-white youth.

The problem was initially brought to light in the 1973 Office of Civil Rights Annual Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey. In that survey schools were asked for a total, by race and ethnic group, of the number of students suspended at least once during the 1972-73 school year. Analysis of the OCR data, representative of roughly 53 percent of the total school enrollment and almost 86 percent of the minority enrollment in the United States, showed that one in every twenty-four children enrolled in reporting districts, and one in every thirteen secondary students enrolled, was suspended at least once. It was further found that although black students represented 27.1 percent of the enrollment in the reporting districts, they constituted 42.3 percent of the racially identified suspensions (Childrens Defense Fund, 1975: 11-12). Finally, it is conceded by most experts that the OCR figures underrepresent the magnitude of the problem in that they do not reflect multiple suspensions. The report also noted that a large number of "racially unidentified" suspensions were reported by districts. The majority of these suspensions were probably minority students.

This two year project, initiated in October 1978, is an exploratory effort aimed at providing information on the organization, operation and impact of programs designed to lessen the incidence of out of school suspension. The potential audience for such information is school administrators seeking to establish such programs in their own buildings or districts.

Field research during the first year of the study was conducted in four school districts. Within each district one or two building level programs were examined. Each site visit lasted for five days, with a total of 10 to 15 days devoted to each site. Specific locations visited were:

- District 1: Southwest/Urban
  Enrollment 1977-78: 203,445

  - one junior high school
  - one senior high school

- District 2: West/Urban
  Enrollment 1977-78: 689,715

  - one elementary school
  - one junior high school

- District 3: East/Suburban
  Enrollment 1977-78: 6,155

  - one middle school
  - one high school

- District 4: East/Suburban
  Enrollment 1977-78: 7,508

  - one senior high school

Data were collected through unstructured interviews with program staff, teachers, administrators, parents and students, by direct program observations, and from a sample of student records. Over 150 interviews were conducted across all sites. Data were extracted by school district employees from close to 1000 student record folders.

Brief summaries of the programs operating in each of the four districts appear in the following section. This is followed by a discussion of the study methodology. The remaining sections of the paper contain summary analysis of first year findings, a discussion of study limitations, and suggestions for future research. Separate appendices were prepared to accompany the original report to NIE which contain detailed case studies for each district, the instrumentation used to collect data during the first year of the study, and a review of the literature (current through April 1979) on suspension and in school alternatives to suspension.

PROGRAM SUMMARIES

The following definition of an in-school alternative to suspension programs has been employed in this study.

> An in-school alternative to suspension is a program to which students are referred in lieu of suspension from school or for accumulating offenses which may lead to out-of-school suspension. Such referral would constitute a disciplinary action; however, the program may include one or more of these: detention, counseling, academic work, work details, parent involvement, crises intervention. Students might participate for one or two periods, a few days, or in some ongoing manner (e.g. once a week for three months). Some schools which sponsor such programs also use home suspension as a disciplinary tool.

STUDENT REFERRAL CENTER (SRC)

District 1, an urban district located in the southwest serves a little over 200,000 students in approximately 300 buildings. The district employs over 15,000 teachers. As a whole, it has experienced declining enrollment. However, there is a high degree of internal mobility with between 11,000-12,000 families moving within the district every year. Neighboring suburban school districts surrounding District 1 are experiencing population growth.

Integration within the district is being accomplished through the use of magnet schools and "majority to minority" transfers. There are still however some "racially isolated" schools such as the high school site visited as part of this study. It is almost all Black. An ethnic balance of White and non-White teachers in school facilites has been in effect for approximately 10 years.

District 1 is divided into six quasi-autonomous Administrative Areas. They are managed by an Area Superintendent who reports to the Superintendent of Schools. Area and building attendance area boundaries are drawn so that they encompass at least one minority population concentration. The Student Referral Center Program, which was the focus of our field research in District 1, is largely funded out of local funds, with some assistance from the County Juvenile Probation Department. The program is targeted on secondary school students (grades 7-12) with some services being offered on a trial basis to 6th grade Middle School Students.

There are 27 Student Referral Centers (SRC) currently operating within the District. The SRC concept was originally introduced in a neighboring school district in 1970. It was picked up by District 1 and a pilot

program was installed at a junior high school in January of 1974. The initial SRC, and the six that followed it between 1974 and 1977 were joint ventures of the district and the County Juvenile Probation Department.

The need for SRC's was based on a growing concern with increased out-of-school suspension and the consequences of such suspensions for both the student and the schools. The involvement of the County Juvenile Probation Department arose from the fact that many of the suspended students were eventually finding their way into the juvenile justice system. In fact, the original 1970 linkage had as one objective the reduction of the daytime juvenile crime rate. This objective was successfully achieved.

Each of the initial SRC's was located in a district facility. They were staffed by three individuals: a counselor, who also served as center coordinator; a SRC classroom teacher; and a youth services worker. In addition to providing the space for each center, the district also supported the salaries of the counselor and teacher. The youth services worker was paid by the County.

The two Centers visited in conjunction with this study were both part of the original group of seven centers. One site was the initial pilot, and thus had been in continual operation with the same staff for just over 5 years at the time of our visit. The second site, a senior high school, has been in operation since September, 1976.

Based on the positive results achieved by the initial seven centers, and a community, student, teacher needs assessment which placed expansion of the SRC program first among 26 priority areas, the Board of Education committed $680,000 for the establishment of 20 additional Student Referal Centers on junior high school campuses during the 1978-79 school year. A youth services worker was not assigned to any of these additional 20 SRC's. Two of the new Centers deal solely with special education referrals.

Each Center serves its own school population plus at least one other feeder school. District 1 has approximately 52 junior and senior high schools divided among the six administrative areas. There is a relatively even division of SRC's among the administrative areas with three areas having four Centers and three areas having five SRC's. District support for the SRC's comes from the Office of Special and Support Services within the district central office. However, line administrative authority over the SRC's runs from each building principal to the Area Superintendent and eventually to the Superintendent of Schools.

Transportation of students to the SRC from feeder schools has always been a problem in the district. No special provisions are made for student transportation, thus diminishing the utility of the SRCs to their feeder schools. There is also some reluctance to send senior high school students to Centers on junior high school campuses.

During the first five months of the 1978-79 school year 9460 students were served by all SRC's. This ranged from a low of 567 referrals in Area V to a high of 3465 referrals in Area IV. While all junior and senior high schools sent some students to an SRC during the five month period, on the average 87.5 percent of all students referred to the SRC's during that time came from schools which were SRC sites. This ranged from 75 to 99 percent across the six Administrative Areas.

The SRC concept, and most recently the 20 new SRC's, have been adopted as an alternative to out-of-school suspension. However, the mandate of the SRC's is somewhat broader in reality. In addition to functioning as an alternative suspension class, the Center is also seen as a source of counseling, as well as a linking point between the schools and other youth service agencies. Self-referrals to the Center are encouraged. At the junior high school which we visited, approximately half of the referrals to the SRC were self-referrals; for the high school program studied, the self-referrals approached 25 percent. Referrals in this category also came from parents, the Juvenile Probation Department, the Courts, or other agencies.

It also appears that, while serving to reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions, the SRC's are not, if the two building sites we visited are typical, being used as comprehensive alternatives to suspension. For example, at the high school site, fighting was an offense which merited an automatic three-day out-of-school suspension for the parties involved. Out-of-school suspension also continued to be used at the junior high site. It was observed, however, that such out-of-school suspensions had declined at both schools since the Centers were established.

It was difficult to collect statistics on disciplinary actions at the building and district levels since the district does not appear to keep such information in any systematic fashion. One possible source of information on suspension practices within District 1 is the suspension figures from the Office for Civil Rights Survey of Elementary and Secondary Schools. A comparison of District 1's figures reported for 1972-73 and 1977-78 shows a decline in suspensions from 9156 to 7668 at a time when the pupil population was falling by over 21,000 students. However, since it is highly likely that many of the in-school suspensions are reported in the 7668 figure, it is not possible to guage precisely how successful the SRC program has been in keeping students with discipline problems in school. A year end report by one of the two sites visited notes, however, that of the total 977 students served during the 1977-78 school year 521 were "referred by school administrator in lieu of home suspension." If this one site is an indication of the general impact of the SRC's on out-of-school suspension, the effect is indeed quite significant.

If the figures for the first five months of the 1978-79 school year are representative, over half of all referrals to the SRC were for tardiness, truancy and leaving either the school building or the

classroom without permission. Other major reasons for referral to the SRC included: fighting, failing to abide by rules and regulations on field trips or at extra curricular activities, using profane, obscene or offensive language, displaying disrespect toward school personnel, defying the authority of school personnel, disruptive behavior, smoking, and possession of a weapon.

Access to services of a Center are either through self-referral or as the result of some disciplinary infraction such as those listed above. Only a building administrator, usually the assistant principal, is able to make the assignment to the SRC. Even self or parental referrals must be approved by the administrator. A newly assigned student is briefed on the arrangement, activities and procedures of the SRC by the counselor. Parents are also contacted and encouraged to visit the Center. Assignments can range from three days to one quarter. Part of the day is spent completing classroom assignments under the direction of the SRC teacher. These assignments are sent by the regular classroom teahcer. The students at each Center also receive group and/or individual counseling as part of the daily program. In some cases the services of various community agencies are utilized. The decision to return a student to his/her regular school building and program is made on an individual basis by the student's home school administrator and the SRC counselor. The primary criteria for this decision are a change in student attitude and successful completion of all assignments sent by the regular classroom teacher. There is a recidivism rate of approximately 10 cent reported in statistics for the first half of the 1978-79 school year. Out-of-school suspension remains an option in cases of flagrant abuse or negative behavior while a student is assigned to the SRC.

On the whole, the SRC's are seen as a useful disciplinary tool whose primary advantage is that they permit students who otherwise would have missed school to remain current in their school work. While each student's routine is somewhat restricted while assigned to the SRC, it is the desire of all teachers and administrators involved that these Centers be seen as constructive and not punitive. Segregation from the regular school program and a prohibition on involvement in extra-curricular activities seems, for students, to be the most unpleasant consequences of assignment to the SRC. There is little data beyond subjective perceptions upon which to judge the "success" or "impact" of the Centers. No formal evaluation of the SRC's had been performed at the time of our visits.

CONTRACTUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM EDUCATION (COPE)

COPE is one component of Opportunity Education, a program for students having difficulty adjusting to traditional school and classroom settings. In 1978-79 there were COPE Rooms, or Opportunity Rooms as they are also sometimes called, in 165 elementary and all 76 junior high schools in District 2.

District 2 had a 1977-78 enrollment of just under 620,000 students. The most recent COPE enrollments figures available were for 1976-77. During that year there were 240 COPE Rooms in operation and it was reported that 989,338 students were served. The reason this is possible is that a period of service, for purposes of the report, was defined as "...from 1/2 hour to 1 1/2 hours." Thus, students assigned to COPE for more than one period were re-counted for each period assigned.

COPE is part of a broader program called Opportunity Education which traces its beginnings back to a district wide concern with drop-outs and the discipline-based reasons for this problem. In 1967, staff work in this area led to the introduction of two bills in the State Senate which subsequently amended the State Education Code to provide for Opportunity Education. In addition to classes in selected elementary schools and all junior high schools, (COPE does not operate at the Senior High School level), Opportunity Education also provides separate schools and centers for students who cannot adjust to the regular school program.

Opportunity Education is directed administratively by the District's Education Options Services Branch. The program is supported by a director and three Opportunity Advisors who work out of the main administrative complex of the school district. At the building level, each building housing a COPE room is provided with an "off-norm" (extra) professional position to staff the room. In the early 1970's some abuse and misuse of these off-norm positions by principals lead to serious concerns about program funding. However, the development of COPE in 1974 provided the structure necessary for renewed confidence in the program. Presently, COPE operates on a budget of approximately $3 million, the bulk of which is allocated to personnel costs. It appears that very little additional money is earmarked for supplies and equipment to support COPE. Rather these funds, where available, are provided out of regular building budgets.

Allocation of COPE positions is based upon need and a position can be shifted from one school to another. Principals must reapply for the position each year. However, if our information is at all valid, it appears that shifting positions is relatively uncommon and that the re-application procedure is pro-forma, in some cases involving little more than updating the prior year's submission.

In setting up a COPE Program, a building can choose from among five options, ranging from a self contained, full day program (Option 1) through a program presented as meeting unique building needs (Option 5). The intervening three options are single period programs where the student attends COPE one period a day. The full day program is the least popular. Only 11 of 241 programs were identified as Option 1 in 1978-79. As would be expected, the program allowing greatest flexibility, Option 5, has the highest representation (88 out of 241). Slightly less than one-fourth of the COPE programs are also being used as cooling off or holding rooms. This option (4) permits service for "one period only".

Lengths of placement for the other options vary. For Option 1, 2, and 3 the minimum placement is a month. If the program is not a full day program, service must be for 180 minutes or less. In Option 5, as has already been stated, the length of assignment and of the program day varies with each program.

Study findings tend to point to one period being the usual student assignment to COPE for any given school day. At the two school sites visited, the average duration of assignment to COPE was 52.7 days at the elementary site and 37.4 days at the junior high school site (1977-78 school year data). This is against an average suspension of three to four days.

Since the focus of the study is on in-school alternatives to suspension, it was quite interesting to note that, while there appeared to be some overlap in offenses committed by students suspended and assigned to COPE at the two study sites, students still were being suspended out of school, often automatically, for certain offenses (e.g., fighting at the junior high). The 1978 Office for Civil Rights Survey of Elementary and Secondary Schools showed District 2 as reporting 33,821 first-time suspensions for the 1977-78 school year. Many of the students assigned to COPE at the two building sites had evidence in their records of one or more suspensions. Interestingly, however, students included in the sample of those suspended out of school at the same sites did not show any evidence of contact with COPE prior to their suspension. If these two sites are representative of the situation within District 2, it would appear that COPE and the disciplinary system that results in suspension are parallel systems and that COPE does not serve, as much as it might, in reducing the use of suspension as a disciplinary tool.

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Guidance is a component of an Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) Title VII Basic Grant program which has existed in District 3 since September of 1975. District 3 is a suburban community located approximately 10 miles west of New York City. The community is soico-economically diverse. The schools serve close to 6200 students. Forty-two percent of the pupil population is Black.

District 2 has had a history of racial unrest dating from the early 1960's. The district is currently operating under a voluntary desegregation plan implemented in September of 1977. The plan is built around the Magnet School concept. Since 1973-74, the first year in which ESAA funds were received, $4,830,554 in assistance has flowed into the district. Current (1978-79) ESAA funds provide 50 percent of the support for Comprehensive Guidance, Career Education and the Magnet Schools, all major components of the integration plan.

Comprehensive Guidance was funded at a level of $191,000 for the 1977-78 school year. This paid for home/school liaison and comprehensive guidance intern positions at both middle schools and two target elementary schools. The 1978-79 ESAA proposal called for the extension of the home school liaison position, on at least a part-time basis, into an additional five elementary schools. Two guidance intern positions at the high school are funded from district revenues.

The goal of Comprehensive Guidance is to reduce the effects of minority group isolation through providing supplemental and extended guidance services to students and improving communication between the home and school. The original concept was developed in 1975 and was a reaction to high rates of suspension, particularly among minority students, drop-outs, absenteeism and class cutting.

One-on-one counseling is the cornerstone of the program. A student can be referred by almost any professional educator in the building, by his/her parents, by other students, or by him/herself. The guidance intern position was originally seen as the primary counseling interface with the student. At the high school, where this position still existed at the time of the study, the interns definitely appeared to be involved with students and parents, both within and outside of the regular education program. These interns were not, however, certificated counselors. This fact caused certain problems in their relationships with the credentialed staff, who sometimes saw the guidance interns as overstepping their role. The problem here was that the role of guidance intern had never been fully defined. The issue of role definitions was compounded by the fact that, until the beginning of the 1978-79 school year, the guidance intern position had not been controlled by building level administrators, but rather directly by an Assistant Superintendent in the central office.

There was no guidance intern at the middle school visited. The woman occupying that position had not been rehired at the beginning of the 1978-79 school year even though a number of staff commented that she had been quite successful with the students and that they "missed her." The position remaining at this site, also found at the second district middle school and some elementary schools, was that of home/school liaison. Unfortunately, the individual occupying that role at the target middle school had also been serving as acting assistant principal since the beginning of the 1978-79 school year. This precluded his undertaking any substantive home/school liaison activities beyond the home contacts which occurred as a result of student disciplinary referrals.

Neither site had an in-school program in the sense of the other three districts visited. That is, there was no separate place to which students were assigned nor was there any specific program in which a student might participate. The ESAA proposals describing Comprehensive Guidance talked about a referral team composed minimally of counselors

and a guidance intern, with other staff involved as needed. There was no evidence of such a team at the middle school site. At the high school, two such teams were in existence but they did not appear to be operating on any type of systematic or regular basis.

Counseling was provided to students on a need basis. Either the student made contact with the guidance intern or home/school liaison staff person or, if a problem was brought to the intern's attention, an attempt was made to contact the student. Comprehensive Guidance staff, particularly at the high school, also seemed to function in part as student advocates.

In addition to counseling, the Comprehensive Guidance program had, through June of 1976, offered conferences for district staff parents and students on topics such as:

- Student Rights and Due Process
- College and Financial Aid Information
- Group Dynamics
- Students' Perceptions and the Grievance Procedure
- College and Career Information
- Parent Concerns

These conferences had continued on a modest scale up through the time of this study.

The only formal evaluation of Comprehensive Guidance that was brought to the researcher's attention was for the first program year (1975-76). The report showed a very slight decline in out-of-school suspensions, but a 5 percent drop in suspensions involving minority students. By the end of 1977 the number of suspensions had declined from 231 in 1974-75 to 184. However, the ratio of minority to non-minority suspensions--72 percent to 28 percent--remained approximately what it had been in 1974-75.

In looking at attendance figures, the average days absent actually increased from 1974-75 to 1975-76 for seven of the eight grade levels served by Comprehensive Guidance. The only exception, 6th Grade, showed no change.

There was a noticeable reduction in dropouts during 1975-76 when compared with the previous school year. Also on the positive side were responses from a survey of students participating in Comprehensive Guidance which showed, in general, highly positive attitudes toward school, school personnel, and the Comprehensive Guidance experience. A similar survey of parents noted that close to nine

out of ten had been contacted by a member of the Comprehensive Guidance Staff during the school year. Seven in ten felt a greater involvement in their child's education than during the prior two school years; and a similar number felt that this fact was attributable to the Comprehensive Guidance Program.

Finally, in looking at the results of formal program evaluations, it is possible to neglect informal program attributes. A number of people commented on how the guidance interns at the high school, because of the trust they had built up with students, were able to defuse a number of racial incidents. Two middle school parents contacted related how the school had assisted them in contacting other parents and becoming more aware of their childrens' out-of-school activities. While these actions do not relate directly to a reduction in out-of-school suspensions, they do most likely contribute to an improved discipline climate which is the objective that all the programs visited have in common.

COUNSELING OPPORTUNITIES IN A PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT (COPE)

The COPE Center is sponsored by District 4, which is located about an hour from Pittsburgh. The district encompasses 48 square miles and serves about 7500 students with a staff of 345 teachers. There are seven elementary buildings, two middle schools, an intermediate school (grades 9-10) and a senior high school (grades 11-12). In 1976-77 the district's operating budget was just under $13 million. The population of District 4 is almost totally white. Most wage earners are employed in professional, technical or highly skilled occupations. The community was described in interviews as being "conservative".

The Center is housed in the senior high school building but also serves the separate intermediate building. It occupies two classrooms on the third floor of the building and is not isolated from the mainstream of the school. In one room, there are study carrels and desks for the program director and his assistant, plus couches and bookcases. Brochures advertising community services are displayed.

The Center has two primary purposes: to serve as an in-house suspension center and to prevent serious behavior problems from developing. This is accomplished primarily via counseling--values clarification, group discussions, self-awareness exercises, and emphasis on students learning to cope better with schoolwork, teachers, and other students. COPE not only serves as a counseling/drop-in center for suspended students, but also invites the entire student body to seek information, advice and tutoring there.

About 50 percent of the COPE staff's salaries are funded with State vocational education money, the remainder of expenses--salaries, supplies, and use of two classrooms--are financed as part of the regular district budget.

The COPE center is staffed by a full-time director and an assistant who, like the guidance counselors, report to both the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Pupil Services and to the building principal. The director conducts entry interviews and orients students to the Center. In suspension cases, he obtains assignments from teachers. For all students he ascertains what kind of counseling strategy would be appropriate, diagnoses learning difficulties, and arranges for tutoring when needed. He consults with faculty and parents about student behavior and acts as a liaison with community agencies. Naturally, there are numerous supervisory and administrative duties connected with all these tasks. The assistant participates in all aspects of these duties.

In addition, counseling interns from nearby colleges participate in group sessions with students and are available part-time for individual counseling. Another source of staff is the OUTREACH center, a community agency partially funded by United Way. Counselors from OUTREACH are available at the high school for drop-in help. They also assist school personnel in handling runaways, drug cases, truants, etc.

Students are referred to COPE by the assistant principal, by teachers, and by OUTREACH. In addition, many students refer themselves. Suspended students may be assigned to COPE anywhere from one period to a day or, in rare cases, for a few weeks with three days fairly typical.

With the recent change to a new director, the program can also be expected to change. However, the daily schedule as of this writing is as follows: First period, students read alone, do art work, study. Second-third period, they study and get individual help with schoolwork. (Students are allowed to attend classes which would be difficult to make up, i.e., if a speaker comes in, test, etc.). Fourth period, a group counseling session is held for suspended students which focuses on how to deal with the school setting. Fifth and sixth period, an ongoing counseling group meets weekly. Participants in the latter group are generally self-referred (not suspended). Meanwhile, other COPE students study or have lunch. One period a day is open for breaks, music, games, etc.

According to the administration, counseling has been and will continue to be the principal focus of the COPE Center. However, plans for the immediate future include more attention to the academic component.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an initial attempt to systematically study the option of in-school suspension. It constitutes exploratory research. The goal is to identify major variables and to generate hypotheses/assumptions about in-school alternatives to out-of-school suspension programs which can then be tested in future research. No claims are made as to the generalizability of study findings beyond the four first year study sites.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Through unstructured interviews and a review of student records answers were sought to the following questions concerning each of the in-school alternative programs being studied and the students who have participated in them.

Descriptive Dimension

1. What are the major events that led to the establishment of the in-school alternative program?

2. Is there a general statement of philosophy or mission which governs the operation of the program?

3. Are there specific performance objectives, with measurable outcomes specified, which govern the operation of the in-school alternative program?

4. How is the program administratively organized?

5. Where does the program fit in the district's administrative structure?

6. What are the staffing, funding and programatic characteristics of the program?

7. What are the characteristics of students placed in the in-school alternative program?

8. Based on an analysis of these characteristics, does it appear that any particular type or class of student is disproportionately referred to the in-school alternative program?

9. What are the characteristics of students who are suspended from school?

10. How do students placed in the in-school alternative program differ

    (a) from students who have not been referred to the in-school alternative program or suspended out of school?

    (b) from students who have been suspended out of school?

11. What is the range and average duration of student participation in the in-school alternative program?

12. What are the major reasons for student referral to the in-school alternative program?

Impact Dimension[1]

13. What effect, if any, has participation in the in-school alternative program had upon a participating student's:

    (a) attendance?
    (b) tardiness?
    (c) academic grades?
    (d) conduct grades (where recorded)?

14. Has the in-school alternative program coincided with a reduction in the number of out-of-school suspensions? (This particular area will be examined for all years that the in-school alternative has been in effect.)

15. What effect has participation in the in-school alternative program had on the involvement of parents of participating students in the disciplinary process and other school related activities?

METHODOLOGY

The four districts chosen to participate in the first year of the study were selected from a group of eight sites which had made presentations at an April 1978 conference sponsored by NIE on in-school alternatives to suspension (Garibaldi, 1979). Each district identified the specific buildings to be visited. In all one week was spent in each of seven buildings.

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[1] These questions should not be seen as implying causation. They are posed to permit investigation of probable relationships which might be studied more extensively and in a much more controlled fashion at some future point in time.

Basic ethnographic methods were employed in the study; that is, open-ended interviews and program observation. The records of approximately 200 students were also sampled in each building.

A total of 164 interviews were conducted with program staff, building administrators, parents, teachers and students. Interviews ranged between 15 minutes (students) and an hour (program staff). Detailed field notes were taken and coded for use in the building case studies. Interviews were based upon topical discussion guides which were reviewed by a monitor for the Committee on Education Information Systems (CEIS) of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and cleared by the DHEW Education Data Acquisition Committee (EDAC) and OMB.

Where a specific program was offered by the in-school alternative, a minimum of four hours of direct observation were scheduled for each site. In addition, the researchers sought to observe the major steps in the referral and placement process employed in each building (e.g., a project researcher was present at the meeting of the placement committee at the junior high school site in District 2).

In order to gather quantitative data on student characteristics and program impact, three samples were drawn in each building from 1977-1978 student records. The building pupil population for that year was divided into three sub-groups:

- students assigned to the in-school alternative program (m=50);
- students suspended out of school (m=25); and
- students neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative program (m=50).

Due to restrictions imposed by local policies and the Family Rights and Privacy Act (1974), staff at each of the sites were employed to perform the sampling and extract the required data from the student records.

Data extracted from each student record included background information (e.g., age, grade level, etc.); experience with suspension and/or assignment to the in-school alternative during the 1977-78 school year, including number and date of assignments, reason for the assignment and its duration; and performance measures such as grades, days absent and conduct marks.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

In considering the design and data collection methods used in this study, these facts should be noted:

- Programs studied are not comparable.
- Some of the interview respondents lacked adequate information on the program under study.
- The ability of school district staff to construct sampling frames, draw samples and extract data from student records varies, but not by factors originally considered.

Programs Are Not Comparable

Not surprisingly, each of the four programs was unique in their service configurations, the factors antecedent to program establishment and, to some degree in physical and staffing characteristics. While this fact was recognized at the beginning of the study, it was assumed that the concept of "in-school alternative to suspension" would be more of a unifying factor than it turned out to be. Even within a given school district, the emphasis was sometimes different.

For example, in District 2, the thrust at the elementary site was preventive. The operational philosophy was that helping a student in reading might forestall some of the frustrations which later result in disciplinary problems. In the same district, the junior high site used COPE primarily as a reactive measure for students who had accumulated a series of disciplinary referrals or who had committed certain specific offenses. At that site, most of the students assigned to COPE appeared to have also experienced prior suspensions while suspended students had not often been given the opportunity to experience COPE before being suspended out of school.

Among the districts in the study there was also little program equivalence. In all instances the in-school alternative to suspension initiative existed in concert with other initiatives. There were no formal policy statements or procedural guidelines governing assignment of students to the in-school alternatives visited.

An example of such a statement is found in Guidelines for Program Placement of the Classrooms for Development and Change (CDC) Program, an ESAA funded project of the Winston-Salem/Forsythe County Public Schools:

> Placement in the CDC program is made through the action of the principal. Since the CDC program is premised on in-school suspension taking the place of out-of-school suspension, placement should be based on a suspendable offense or action on the part of the student ...
>
> CDC placement may be for all of a day of part of a day... Generally, a three-day period is considered minimum. Ten days is the maximum assignment....
>
> Due process for the student must be observed when suspensions occur.

The document, CDC Program Guidelines 1979-80, goes on to provide general program guidelines, guidelines for the CDC staff and guidelines for school principals. It concludes with a caveat which places the program in perspective with other discipline alternatives:

> It is unrealistic to assume that the CDC program can take the place of all out-of-school suspensions. However, a major thrust of the program should be toward that end. Placement in CDC should occur as often as the principal sees it as a viable option, and CDC should be used as an attempt to decrease the number of out-of-school suspensions which would normally be made during 1979-80.

While the programs visited were governed to some degree by "guidelines" none clearly defined the purpose of the program as clearly as the above example. Nor, with the possible exception of District 2, was any detailed, formal, written guidance provided to building or program staff on their roles and that of the program within the district's disciplinary framework.

This is not to imply that the programs visited were not well meaning in their objective to reduce out-of-school suspensions. Simply stated, there was often no way to determine the rules and procedures under which this activity was conducted.

A similar problem of non-comparability/non-existence occurred with reference to disciplinary records. We began the study with the assumption that, in light of state and federal regulations and court cases, there would be reasonably accurate district and building level records on out-of-school suspensions. For example, three of the four study sites were, and continue to be part of the sample for the Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey (Office for Civil Rights; Forms 101 and 102). In addition, District 3 would be expected to receive Form 532-2 titled, Supplemental Information for Local Education Agency Grants under the Emergency School Aid Act. The OCR Form 102 has requested district and building information on first-time suspension since 1972-73, biannually from 1975 through 1979. Form 532-2 requires more detail on suspensions. Both require a breakout by ethnic group of students suspended. They also request the rates for expulsion and corporal punishment (See Exhibit III.3).

TABLE 1

LIST OF RELEVANT ITEMS IN OCR FORMS AND WHERE THEY ARE COLLECTED

Items by racial/ethnic groups	DISTRICT LEVEL Date	DISTRICT LEVEL OCR Form	INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL LEVEL Date	INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL LEVEL OCR Form
1. No. of pupils (membership)	--	--	Oct. 1976, Oct. 1978 Oct. 1977, Oct. 1979	102 532-2
2. No. of pupils receiving corporal punishment	--	--	1975-76, 1977-78 1976-77, 1978-79	102 532-2
3. No. of pupils suspended[1]	--	--	1975-76, 1977-78 1976-77, 1978-79	102 532-2
4. No. of days suspended, at intervals for one-time offenders	--	--	1976-77	532-2
5. No. of pupils expelled[2]	1975-76, 1977-78	101	1975-76	102
6. No. of students referred for disciplinary actions to juvenile court	--	--	1976-77	532-2
7. No. of students referred to alternate education programs as formal disciplinary measure	--	--	1976-77	532-2

[1] Suspension data are also available for 1972-1973 and 1973-74.

[2] Expulsion data are available for all preceding years extending as far back as 1970-71.

Note 1: OCR Forms 101 and 102 were filled out in Fall 1976 and 1978; OCR Forms 532-1 and 532-2 were filled out in Fall 1977 and 1979.

Note 2: Forms 101 and 102 are sent to all ESAA applicants, to statistically-selected samples of school districts with specific characteristics and to districts operating under court order to desegregate. The number of districts within a state obviously varies. In some states, like Florida, all districts are eligible for the sample. The sample changes depend on the criteria used. All schools within a sample district must complete Form 102. OCR Forms 532-1 and 532-2 are mailed to all ESAA applicants - between 600 and 700 school districts.

Site visitors found that building level statistics on out-of-school suspension were non-existent in most cases and difficult, at best, to secure at the district level. For example, we were told in District 1 that district suspension data was compiled "only in the years HEW asks for it." In most cases, we depended on OCR data in the larger districts or on data that were not current.

The following potential problems exist in statistics on suspension or other disciplinary actions:

- Unclear or inconsistent definitions (e.g., suspension).
- Unclear or inconsistent instructions (e.g., instructions that do not accommodate all possible alternatives).
- Clerical and copying errors (e.g., transposing figures and listing figures in the wrong columns).
- Classification errors (e.g., counting Hispanics as Blacks).
- Arithmetical errors (e.g., sum of entries do not equal the total reported).
- Illogical responses (e.g., total number of suspended students can be greater than the sum of the numbers in the individual ethnic groups due to ethnically unidentified students, but it cannot be less).
- Lack of agreement between reports (e.g., disagreement between teacher records of student infraction and student referral forms).
- "Deviant" cases (e.g., excessively high or low incidences of disproportionality).

The first item is a case in point. Do the districts visited count students assigned to their in-school alternative program as suspended students for purposes of federal reporting? If so, how does this reconcile with the fact that such students would not be counted in completing state and local reports in those districts where aid is based on average daily attendance (e.g., District #1).

JWK is presently in the beginning stages of a project to assess the reliability and validity of measures of disciplinary action (e.g., suspension, expulsion, corporal punishment) in districts receiving ESAA assistance to reduce disproportionate disciplinary actions against minority students. When this study is completed, we should have a clearer picture of the comparability of discipline related data among districts.

During the second year of this study of in-school alternatives, an attempt is being made to control the programatic variance among

districts through a more controlled section of field sites. Pre-selection site visits will permit determination as to whether or not there exists an identifiable and viable in-school alternative to suspension program at the site. It also allows assessment of the adequacy of the statistical data describing the program and the definition and application of other significant terms relevant to the disciplinary process.

Respondent Lack of Information

The RFP specified certain classes of respondent for the study. In a number of building settings, regular teachers, non-participating students and parents appeared to lack substantive information on the program under study. While this in itself was a significant finding, it was also problematic in that setting up and conducting interviews with these individuals sometimes proved to be the most difficult logistical chore for the site liaison person.

During the second year of the study, this problem will be addressed through a two-stage data collection procedure which will first employ a brief descriptive survey with an overall sample from regular teachers, non-participating students and parents. Assuming that points of interest are surfaced through this initial survey, they will be followed-up through focused probes during the second site visit. It is estimated that this procedure will save about two days of field activity in each district site and will reduce the time burden imposed on pupils and teaching staff. Interviews with program staff, principals/ assistant principals and participating students will be continued.

In general, an effort will be made to enter each of the second year sites more informed than during the first year. This will be possible because of the initial pre-selection visits. The utility of the second site visit will be further enhanced because both program description survey and student records review data should be in hand and analyzed prior to that event.

It might be argued that the Program Director's meeting held at the beginning of Year 1 partially served the same function as the pre-selection site visit, as well as permitting collection of background information on the site. However, the person who attended, often a central office representative, could not talk substantively about building applications, particularly in the case of the two large urban sites. This is not to denigrate the contribution of these individuals during the October 1979 meeting. However, it was still necessary for JWK staff to orient themselves at the building level when they first arrived at each district site.

Capabilities of Site Personnel to Conduct Records Review

In the initial study design, the type of individual who might best do the Records Review was not specified. The initial tendency was to favor the use of counselors or other professionals who would understand

the nature of the task and would be familiar with the content of the student records. There was also the expectation that in large urban districts the study would benefit from some centralized record keeping system.

With one exception, it was found that the best quality data, in terms of consistency, accuracy and completeness, occurred in two cases where record clerks completed the forms. The least complete data set was received from a district with "centralized records" and a central research staff.

It was also advantageous if the person completing the records review task was a staff member in the building under study. Such individuals were more familiar with the record system. They also induced less anxiety in the building principal, who in one case, was concerned about his staff having to bear the burden of "showing the outsider the ropes."

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Building level data were generated during this study through unstructured interviews, direct observation of programs and a review of three samples of student records for the 1977-78 school year. It was originally intended to perform some basic content analyses and comparisons of interview data. While interview material has been categorized to a limited degree, it was generally found that the small numbers of respondents in each category and the lack of information about the programs being studied, particularly among teachers and non-participating students, rendered most of the intended content analysis pointless.

Data from the review of student records were in all four basic forms--nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. Nominal and ordinal data for the three independent samples--students assigned to the in-school alternative program, students suspended out-of-school, and students neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative--were analyzed using the chi square (χ^2) test for independent samples. Alpha (α) was set at .05 for rejection of the null hypotheses of independent measures. Asymmetric lambdas (λ) were computed for each significant chi square. In the statistical portion of the analyses the objective was to identify the degree to which knowledge of:

(a) A student's grade level, age or sex yielded a reduction in error in predicting assignment to one of the three sample groups (i.e., assigned to the in-school alternative, suspended, or neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative)

(b) Group membership resulted in a reduction in error in predicting student grades, conduct marks or attendance.

Lambda was selected as the measure of association because, unlike other measures of association--phi squared (ϕ^2), contingency coefficient (C), Tschuprow's T, and Cramer's $\hat{V}$--it can be meaningfully interpreted. For example, a λ_y value of .25 indicates that using X as the predictor leads to a 25 percent reduction in predicting categories of Y. Values of λ range from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating total independence and 1 implying total dependence of the two variables in the contingency table. As a general rule, the greater the variation in both the dependent and independent variable, the greater the numerical value of association.

One problem with lambda is cited in Reynolds (1977). He states that:

> In some tables ... lambda equals zero even if the variables are not statistically independent. This arises when the modal class of y is so large relative to the other y values that all n_{mj} are in the same row. (p. 45)

Where this occurs Goodman and Kruskal's tau (T), also an asymmetric measure, has been computed. Like lambda, tau lies between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating statistical independence and 1 implying perfect association. The advantage of tau is that it is less sensitive to variation within the contingency table.

Given the unequal sample sizes in the Records Review component of the study, all tables of observed frequencies were smoothed by percentaging the sample groups. Each cell was converted to percent values and these values were then treated as if they were raw frequencies. Percentaging effectively standardizes a variable because it assumes that the variable has exactly 100 cases. However, the proportional relationship between the variables remains the same.

In the instructions to the individual responsible for sampling student records in each building, the following sample sizes were requested:

- Students assigned to the in-school alterntive program (n=50).
- Students suspended out-of-school (n=25).
- Students neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative program (n=25).

The following completed, useable Record Review forms were received:

Site / Group	Students assigned to the in-school alternative	Students suspended out-of-school	Students neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative
District 1			
Junior High School	49	24	54
Senior High School	52	25	54
District 2			
Elementary School	20	5	50
Junior High School	44	26	52
District 3			
Middle School	49	14	40
Senior High School	49	25	50
District 4			
Senior High School	41	17	27

Interval and ratio data--student grade point averages on a 0.0 to 4.0 scale and attendance--were subjected to one way analysis of variance. Post hoc comparison of mean pair relations was conducted using Scheffe's test (Scheffe, 1959). According to Hays (1963), the test has advantages of simplicity, applicability to groups of unequal sizes and relative insensitivity to departures from normality and homogeneity of variance.

In any data reduction exercise there is a risk of being lulled into a false sense of security through the application of statistical treatments. The student records data in this study are suspect as regards their quality and the possible lack of adherence to proper sampling conventions during data collection. Quantitative analyses have been performed not to hide this fact, but to identify areas where further analysis or more controlled follow-up research might be undertaken.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted first to the narrative presentation of summary findings on the history, philosophy, structure and operation of the programs visited. This will be followed by a general discussion of the quantitative data generated by the review of student records.

PROGRAM HISTORY

Three of the four programs visited began in 1975. The fourth was initiated during the late 1960's. However, the component being studies in this investigation began in 1974. In the two smaller sites, conceptualization and initial installation of the in-school alternative programs were the responsibility of a single person or a small group of individuals. In both sites these individuals have since either left the district or taken other, in-district positions. This change in program sponsorship at the central office level has had consequences for program operation at the building level. Of the four program staff providing service at the building sites visited in each of these two districts, three left their positions during the period of the study.

The two large urban sites experienced a somewhat different adoption process. The first district implemented the in-school alternative program on the basis of its success in reducing the daytime juvenile crime rate in surrounding school districts. It was demonstrated in these neighboring districts that the daytime juvenile crime rate was directly related to the incidence of out-of-school suspension. The program, interfacing as it did with the County Probation Department, also provided a method for diverting students from the juvenile justice system through counseling, intervention and referral to community youth service agencies. While this district was the last in its area to adopt the in-school alternative concept, it has, based on positive experience and community demand, allocated over half a million dollars to expand the program to 20 additional sites during the 1978-79 school year.

In the second large urban district, a local task force looking at the problem of drop-out prevention in the late 1960's influenced state legislation which permitted creation of the initial in-school alternative program. It appears that the crucial period for this program was from 1971 through 1974 when a fiscal crisis caused a major re-examination of the in-school alternative concept. During our interviews a number of individuals commented that there was one person working at the central office level, who was primarily responsible for convincing the Board of Education to provide a transition period to re-define program goals.

Despite a requirement that building principals annually re-apply for the staff position which supports the in-school alternative, the total number of sites and site locations have remained quite stable in this second district since 1975. However, a series of reorganizations of component administrative areas within the district has influenced the level of central office support available to individual in-school alternative programs.

Concern about out-of-school suspension was given as the primary reason for creation of the programs studied in all four sites. However, it was also evident that all of the sites still employ out-of-school suspension as a disciplinary tool. The lack of data on school discipline, and particularly on out-of-school suspensions, in all sites was surprising. In the two large urban sites it was not possible to document the impact of the individual building programs visited on the rates of out-of-school suspension. The feeling was expressed, however, that a decline had indeed occurred.

All of the sites were using their programs to some degree to deal with truant and tardy students, as opposed to the former practice of suspending such students out-of-school after a certain number of offenses. However, all also have one or more offenses (e.g., fighting, smoking, drug possession, etc.) for which out-of-school suspension remains automatic. Finally, it did not appear that most of the sites had placed the in-school alternative program on any continuum of disciplinary actions available to the assistant principal or other building disciplinarian. For example, we could detect no instance, with the possible exception of one of the smaller sites, where the informal procedure was to use referral to the in-school alternative as an intermediate step in the disciplinary process prior to the out-of-school suspension.

On the other hand, while there was no hierarchy of reactions to a specific student infraction, all of the programs claimed to be proactive in seeking out and helping students at risk of suspension or other punishment. All sites had a procedure, or at least the capability, for a teacher, parent, and in some cases students to refer individual students to the program. Self referrals by students were also encouraged.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

There was a written district statement of program philosophy in one of the large urban sites. It appeared in both a district handbook and in general guidelines for the in-school alternative program which were published as an administrative bulletin. In the second large urban site, similar individual mission statements were found in the annual reports issued by the two building programs which we visited. The third site--a small suburban district--had as a goal the reduction of the effects of minority group isolation. Since out-of-school suspension was seen as a particularly severe problem for non-white students, a specific objective -- a 30 percent reduction in out-of-school suspensions -- was set for the project. There was no written information on the fourth program.

With the exception of one large district, it did not appear that the sites had developed any district wide policies or procedures which described the purpose of the in-school alternative program or how a student might be assigned to it. In those cases where student handbooks were issued, we found little, if any, mention of the purpose and operation of the in-school alternative program. As an example, in one of the large districts, a district wide discipline code was distributed to all students. While the code presented out-of-school suspensions as a disciplinary option, it nowhere mentioned the in-school alternative program.

Specific, meaningful program objectives were either lacking or deficient in all sites. In the two cases where they did occur--one large site and one small district--they were more proforma and had generally been copied verbatim from applications of prior years. At one site, the proposed outcome of a thirty percent reduction in out-of-school suspensions continued to be used in the fourth-year program material even though that objective had not been achieved in the three prior program years.

The general lack of objectives made meaningful internal evaluation of the programs difficult. Only two of the sites--one large urban site and one of the smaller sites with a federally funded program--had undertaken major evaluations of their program. The documents were four and five years old respectively and were not followed up on any regular and systematic basis. One of the larger sites does have an annual evaluation of sorts which asks the program staff member, in cooperation with the building principal, to respond to a series of general statements about the program by rating each statement on a scale of 1 to 5. The response options range from (1) "we are very pleased" to "we need very concentrated effort"(5). An annual summary of these responses is reported. However, there was no evidence that the information in any way affected building practice.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

In the two large districts, with 28 and 241 building sites in operation respectively, the major accountability and administrative responsibility for the programs resided with the building principal. The line of administration ran from the building, through the area administrative offices to the central office. Both districts had central office staff support for their programs. In both cases it appeared that this support staff served a monitoring function. The first district has placed central office monitoring and support functions for the in-school alternative with the Deputy Superintendent for Special Services. The responsible individual was the Director of Guidance. She had no staff to assist her in supporting the in-school alternative. Transfer of program responsibility to Special Services occurred during the 1977-78 school year. Prior to that time, program support resided with the Associate Superintendent for Alternative Education.

The second large district had a similar central office support configuration, with the in-school alternative program residing within a unit of the Division of Educational Support Services. Three full-time staff members and a coordinator were available to support 241 programs. They were carrying loads of between 85 and 90 programs apiece and, while they try to visit each building site at least once a year, their major development activities focus on monthly workshops for program staff in a given administrative area and working with new building staff. Two years ago this support function was located in each area administrative office. However, split responsibilities (1/2 in-school alternative, 1/2 special education) dissipated the effect of the program advisors on individual program operations. This fact, plus a funding cut-back caused the support function to be consolidated in the central administrative complex at the start of the 1977-78 school year.

While the individuals occupying central office support positions are highly motivated, their load and diverse responsibilities appear to militate against providing meaningful program support at the individual building level.

The first of the smaller districts also administered its program, which continues to be in large measure federally funded, out of the cental office. Originally the program was coordinated out of the office of an Assistant Superintendent who had been influential in the design and installation of the program. After she left, program responsibility shifted to the Office of Pupil Services. In this district, assignment of programs to particular buildings was specified in the federal contract which provided program resources. What made this program particularly interesting from the structural/ organizational point of view was its relationship to racial integration, a major issue in the community for the last decade. From interview comments it appeared that the program was initially introduced into the schools on short notice. Building level staff did not appear to have been significantly involved in program design or in the development of the funding proposal. Thus,

there was some resentment and resistance on the part of a number of teachers and counselors when the program was finally implemented, particularly at the high school. This problem was not helped by the fact that a confrontation model and role for the program staff were sanctioned by the Assistant Superintendent. Whether or not this was justified, it left residual bad feelings on the part of the regular building staff, both Black and White, which were still evident at the time of the site visit.

Also exacerbating the problem in this district was the federal funding cycle for the particular program which provided resources for the in-school alternative. Often funding decisions were not made until shortly before the opening of school, and sometimes not until one or two months into the school year. This uncertainty made it extremely difficult to plan and placed significant stress on program staff who were often uncertain whether their positions would be continued.

Two of the four district sites visited had programs which served more than one building. In one smaller site the program was available to grades nine through twelve. Students in these grades were in two buildings; one for grades 9-10, and one for grades 11-12. The program was housed in the latter building. Although the buildings were within walking distance from each other, there was some reluctance to send students, particularly ninth graders, up to the senior high school.

One of the two large districts has program boundaries which required that each in-school alternative program serve at least one other building. Transportation was a major problem in this service model. It became the responsibility of the student or his parents. There was also some reluctance to send senior high students down to programs housed in junior high schools. As a result, an average of just under 88% of all students served by the in-school alternative program in the first five months of the 1978-79 school year came from the buildings in which the program was actually housed.

Finally, with one exception, all of the programs visited were totally operated by the school district. The exception, found in one of the large districts was a cooperative relationship, in seven of twenty-seven sites between the schools and the county juvenile probation department. This model allowed student access to a range of community services and greatly increased the power of the program to serve student needs. While one member of the program team was actually an employee of county probation, it appears that most of the problems of conflict and control between the schools and the county agency had been avoided. There was, however, some discussion during our site visits about the continued funding of the Youth Services Worker position by the county.

Informal linkages existed between in-school alternative programs and community agencies in the two smaller district sites. In both instances the community agencies were primarily counseling oriented and provided supplemental counseling services to students in the in-school alternative program.

PROGRAM OPERATION

Staffing

The size, type and qualification of staff varied. An overriding criterion in staff selection at all sites was an ability to work positively with students. The two large districts used credentialed teachers and counselors as program staff. In one of the small district sites, the original program director was an elementary school teacher, who subsequently earned a doctorate in counseling. This individual was recently replaced by a non-educator who had formerly worked with a community youth service agency. The final district originally intended to employ counseling interns--graduate students in counseling from local colleges. They were to work under the supervision of a certificated counselor. The program was finally staffed at the high school by two men, neither of whom had counseling credentials, and one of whom did not possess a four year college degree. Individuals working at the two middle school sites in this district were both credentialed educators.

A general finding from the four sites was that there appeared to be more conflict/resistance to the program in buildings where an outsider and/or an individual not a certificated teacher or counselor was employed to staff the program. It must be pointed out, however, that where such resistance occurred, it was as much a function of the style of the individuals involved as it was their lack of a formal credential.

Generally, the in-school alternative programs visited were not well integrated into the school program. At two of the three sites in the two smaller districts, they tended to be viewed as intrusions. It did not appear that the building level program staff in these two buildings made a major effort to cultivate the support of building teachers. Teacher satisfaction and support of the in-school alternative program appeared strongest in those buildings where known teachers were selected to staff the program.

It was surprising to note in the one district where program expansion had occurred that experienced staff from the original program sites were not actively involved either in planning for the program expansion or in providing in-service or informal support to staff of the new programs.

Six of the seven building sites had full time staff assigned to the program. However, the effectiveness of one staff member was seriously impaired due to assignment of additional administrative responsibilities. In the seventh building site, the in-school alternative was staffed by two teachers on a rotating basis. Both of these individuals were subject specialists, one in English, the other in Mathematics. Both were female, one Black and one White. Given the ethnic make-up of the school and the needs of the students, the thought was expressed by a number of individuals that the use of more than one person provided counseling alternatives for students in the program.

Informally supplementing the program team at each building site visited, particularly the junior high school, was the district attendance teacher assigned to cover the building. A final linkage that was evolving at the high school site at the time of study was between the in-school alternative program and the home-school-community staff member. This latter position was supported by ESAA funds. It was designed as an outreach to assist students with problems in their homes (e.g., intervention with parents), to serve as a link between home and school, and to help students in the community (e.g., in securing and holding a job). Home-school-community positions were managed by the same central office staff member responsible for the in-school alternative program. Thus a functional merger was feasible. Our site work concluded before any such merger occurred.

The second urban site assigned only one full-time equivalent staff position per program. In this district, the program staff member at each building visited was a credentialed teacher. At the junior high school site, counseling and a values clarification component were provided as part of the program. There was also a close working relationship between the teachers and the building counselors.

One final point needs to be made with regard to program staffing: The position of teacher/counselor in an in-school alternative program is very intensive. The individual is dealing almost exclusively with student problems and often does not have much opportunity to interact with the higher achieving, self-motivated learner. Splitting a full time position between two staff members, as was the case in one of the sites visited, provides an opportunity for the individuals to maintain their perspective and limits the burden which such a program imposes. There did not appear to be any adverse administrative consequences attendant to this staffing configuration in the site where it was found.

We have devoted considerable attention to program staffing because the quality of staff is the key element in the success of an in-school alternative program. Briefly, we will now discuss program emphasis, building and district support of in-school alternative programs, the referral process, the daily program, participant follow-up and program evaluation.

Program Emphasis

Two of the four district programs -- both large districts -- combined academic and counseling components in their programs. In one district these needs were met by two separate staff members, one a master teacher and one a counselor, who also served as program coordinator. The third individual, a Youth Services Worker, functioned as both a counselor and as a link between the school and community agencies.

The programs at two small district sites tended to emphasize counseling. In one district, the teaching staff was critical of the in-school alternative programs for neglecting academics. The new director hired in this district was given instructions to remedy this deficiency in the program.

The emphasis on academics in an in-school alternative program suggests risk that the student may relate school work with punishment, particularly if assignment to the in-school alternative program is seen as purely punitive.

One aspect of the counseling/academic issue was the concern expressed by at least one teacher in each of five building sites that the programs were "too much fun." Many of the teachers taking this position did not see the counseling component of the program as meaningful. Often this was based on a lack of knowledge about what the program was trying to accomplish. These teachers also resented the fact that, in some buildings, the students assigned to the program were not more restricted in their activities (e.g., lunch, participation in extra curricular activities, etc.).

On the other hand, assignment to the in-school alternative, even if only for one period a day, did provide the student with some time to do homework and/or catch up on his or her studies. This was particularly true in programs where student assignment was full time. Most of the participating students in such full time programs commented that they probably did more school work while assigned there than at any other time to date. This constitutes a definite advantage of such programs over out-of-school suspension where the student often gets behind in class work and cannot make it up.

The academic effect of in-school alternative programs is enhanced when teachers actively cooperate with program staff by sending work for students. The cooperation of teachers with the in-school alternative staff varied across sites. It appeared highest where the in-school alternative program staff were seen as part of the faculty and making efforts to get to know other teachers.

Variations in length of staff tenure were noted at the sites visited. They ranged from one year in two of the building sites, to the entire life of the program (four to five years) in four locations. There did not appear to be any relationship between staff tenure and program quality, beyond the fact that staff with longer tenure were more aware of building/community conditions - student needs.

The highest degree of program acceptance, in the subjective opinion of project staff, was found in a junior high school where the two program staff members had been in the building as regular teachers for some time prior to taking over the in-school alternative program. This site also exhibited a high degree of support for the program by the assistant principal, the grade level directors and the counselors.

Program Support

Program support can be divided into three basic categories: space, material resources and human resources. Three of the four programs operated in a designated space with full-time staff. Most usually the space was a regular classroom. The fourth program was built around a one-to-one counseling model. In this latter program students were not removed for any period of time from their regular school program. None of the space configurations were seen as significantly enhancing or inhibiting the operation of the programs visited, either in relation to their ability to serve students or their status with respect to other building programs. All rooms, in the five sites which had dedicated facilities for students assigned to the in-school alternative, appeared to be adequately equipped to support the goals of the respective programs.

Material resources and the cost effectiveness of programs are difficult to define. We know that the projected costs for one of the large districts to start up an additional 20 in-school alternative programs staffed by two full-time professionals was $680,000 for 1979-80. This works out to $34,000 per new program, but there was no information provided to show what, except for salaries, was included in this figure. The other urban district dedicates approximately $3 million to in-school alternatives. This averages out to $12,500 per program. The figure, however, does not correlate with the district's professional salary schedule. We were told that one of the small districts operates its program on a budget of $28,000, the bulk of which is for the salary of the program director. The final site, which is federally funded, reported a program cost of $191,000 in 1977-78. This supported 6 1/2 full time employees. However, there is some question as to whether this amount includes the high school program, which is staffed by two full time guidance interns and supported by local funds. Supplies for most programs are usually purchased from building funds.

Computing a unit cost per student served by the programs is pointless given the differing service delivery configurations found in each site. One significant financial element however, is that districts receiving state aid based on average daily attendance (ADA) benefit from an in-school alternative program since the students in the program can still be counted for aid purposes. This can be a significant saving in larger districts with high suspension rates and can be used to offset part of the cost of the in-school alternative program.

Human resource support systems that are necesary for an in-school alternative program already exist in most school districts. A number of the sites visited actively involved counselors, teachers and outside community agencies, both public and private, in the in-school alternative program. While larger districts, such as one of the sites visited, can sometimes afford central office support staff, smaller districts can benefit from new and creative linkages with individuals and organizations both inside and outside of the schools. A sophisticated and expensive district level support system is not necessary for the successful operation of an in-school alternative to suspension program. However, some type of monitoring system might be advisable in a program with more than 10 building sites.

Referral Process

The referral process is crucial to the success of an in-school alternative program. It provides the control which keeps the program from being used inappropriately and/or as a "dumping ground" for problem students with whom teachers and administrators can't or won't deal. There was a formal or informal procedure in three of the seven buildings visited which required that referrals to the program be coordinated through the principal or some other designated administrator. In three sites it appeared that the bulk of the referrals/assignments were made at the beginning of the semester or the academic year. For a program to be meaningful as an alternative to suspension, it is necessary that there be some control in the assignment of students.

Perhaps the best assignment system was found in a junior high school where a referral committee met each week to make assignments to, and consider release of students from the in-school alternative program. At the one meeting which was observed, the use of formal assignment criteria did not appear to be operating. The principal question was: "Can this student benefit from the _____ Program?" Furthermore, most cases before the committee were students who had an accumulation of offenses, as opposed to one suspendable infraction. Still, the committee members seemed to agree among themselves about the type of student whom the program might benefit. They were also able to share information about students and to suggest among themselves alternatives or supplementary measures to help individual students.

As with entry, release from the program was, in five of the seven sites, at the approval of the administrator, who usually consulted with program staff.

Table IV-1 is a summary of reasons for assignment to the in-school alternative (A), as compared with out-of-school suspension (S), for each of the seven building sites visited. The figures shown are percentages of the total number of reasons for assignment. Data for this table were taken from the student Record Review forms.

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TABLE 2

REASONS FOR ASSIGNMENT TO THE IN SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE (Percent)

Site / Infraction	DISTRICT 1 Junior High A[1]	S[2]	DISTRICT 1 Senior High A	S	DISTRICT 2 Elementary A	S	DISTRICT 2 Junior High A	S	DISTRICT 3 Middle School A	S	DISTRICT 3 Senior High A	S	DISTRICT 5 Senior High A	S	Unweighted Summary Rank A	S
Fighting with teachers									NO DATA REPORTED	10	NO DATA REPORTED				13.5	14
Fighting with other students			22	40	9			35		20		13		9	5	1
Vandalism, destruction of property								6					8	9	9.5	10
Truancy, tardiness, loitering, class cutting	8	18	11	11			54	6		10			12		3	5
Classroom behavior problems	46	31	11				38	12						9	2	7
Disrespect to teachers		12	11	7			8	24		20		7	8		7	4
Arguments with teachers/administrators								12							13.5	11
Arguments with other students	8	4						5		30			17	15	8	3
Cigarette smoking		4		7											13.5	12.5
Dress code violation		4	13	7						10		7	33	14	4	8
Drug use (including marijuana)															13.5	15.5
Use of alcohol	8	4		7								7			9.5	12.5
Theft	7		11	13								40	8		6	9
Other				6		40						20		14	13.5	6
Poor academic progress	23	21			91	60						6	9	10	1	2
Possessing a weapon															13.5	15.5
TOTAL (Percent)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	0	100	0	100	100	100		

[1] Students assigned to the in school alternative program in 1977-78.

[2] Students suspended out of school 1977-78.

$r_{rho} = .7265$
$p < .01$

Considering unweighted rank relationships between A and S, that is comparing percentages without accounting for the initial disparity in total number of reasons reported both within and between building sites, it can be seen that the main reason for suspension is fighting among students; while assignment to the in-school alternative program is most often a result of poor academic progress (3 buildings) and classroom behavior problems. A Spearman rank order correlation coefficient computed on the unweighted rankings of reasons for either suspension or assignment to the in-school alternative program yields a value of $r_{rho} = .7265$. If the in-school alternative were truly an alternative to suspension, Table IV-1 could not be constructed because there would be few, if any, out of school suspensions to report.

We interpret the high correlation (r_{rho}) as indicating a high overlap between reasons for out of school suspension and assignment to the in-school alternative program. If this is so, then the programs are, in most instances, being used as an alternative to, but not a total substitute for out of school suspension. It might also indicate some lack of consistency in assigning a student to one or the other groups for basically the same offense.

One might expect to see the in-school alternative serve an intermediary placement in the case of a first offense, with out of school suspension employed only in the case of continued misbehavior. It was interesting to note, on examination of individual building data that, in the two large districts, it was more likely for a student to have first been suspended and then assigned to the in-school alternative program. This was particularly true where offenses were involved for which district or building discipline policy mandated automatic suspension (e.g., smoking, fighting).

One area of concern in this data was the continued use of out-of-school suspensions in response to student truancy, tardiness and/or class cutting. This practice was definitely on the decline. Teachers we talked with at all sites were in relative agreement in their belief that suspension for truancy and tardiness leads to the student falling farther behind in their class work, often resulting in increased behavior problems.

Even with more serious offenses there is some question about the efficacy of out-of-school suspension. If, for example, a child is suspended for substance abuse with no provision of counseling or other help during the period while he or she is out of school, there is a high likelihood that other incidents of abuse will occur during this period of time. In-school alternative programs are one vehicle to provide help for such students.

A further disturbing finding in the four sites is that out-of-school suspension, or the threat of such action, was often used as a means of "getting the parents attention" or alerting them to the seriousness of a problem". Most often the threat was invoked when other attempts at parent contact had failed.

Parent involvement in the in-school alternative assignment and release process was usually limited to a letter or personal conference prior to assignment to the program. For the larger districts, the parents, and in some cases students, at the junior high level or above, could contest or refuse the assignment. Often refusal resulted either in out-of-school suspension or, in the one district where corporal punishment was permitted, "swats." Parents contacted seemed, for the most part, satisfied with their children's experience in the program, but they were not able to move beyond general statements of satisfaction to a discussion of specific program attributes which they found helpful, either for themselves or their children. Access to a telephone was cited by program staff as the one thing most helpful in maintaining parent contact.

Daily Program

In analyzing the daily program of the in-school alternative, it is necessary to divide the building sites visited into three categories.

- Full-time assignment: 3 building sites
- Part-time assignment: 2 building sites
- No formal program: 2 building sites

Of those programs to which a student is assigned full time, most receive the student on the day of the actual offense, or on the day following the offense. An intake interview is usually conducted by one of the program staff members. During this interview, the reasons for the student's assignment to the program are discussed and the program rules and restrictions are reviewed.

When a student is assigned to the program, the regular classroom teachers are contacted, usually by the office, and asked to send assignments to the program staff member. These assignments are completed during the student's time in the program and are either graded by the program staff or returned to the classroom teacher. In all three sites regular teachers are expected to continue to provide assignments for as long as the student remains in the in-school alternative program. Satisfactory completion of the assignments was usually a condition for the student's release from the program. Most of the program staff members interviewed stated that teacher cooperation in providing and grading assignments is crucial to the success of any academic component of an in-school alternative program.

During the period of their assignment, students are expected to report in the morning directly to the center. In those instances where they are referred from other schools, transportation to the program site is the student's problem. This fact limited the utility of the program for some buildings in one of the large districts visited.

While assigned to the program, some restrictions are placed on students regarding participation in school activities. These include restricted lunch periods and prohibition against participation in extracurricular activities, including dances and athletics. Removal from school social life seemed to be a major deterrent against repeat offenses according to students we interviewed.

Each of the three full time sites also had some type of daily counseling activity. This varied from viewing films or individual work on multi-media material and/or workbooks, to informal individual and group discussion of the student's progress in the program and work on improving the behavior which resulted in his or her assignment to the program. Free time was sometimes used as a reward for satisfactory progress.

Two of the three sites were housed in two contiguous classrooms. One room was used for regular instruction; the second was set up as a lounge, with couches, posters, etc. It was interesting to note that some teachers equated these amenities with "the programs not being strict enough." Regular staff tended to want a punitive program where students would be "taught a lesson." Program staff, on the other hand, were very careful to avoid the programs being seen as punishment. They were also continually seeking to minimize any stigma which might be attached to student assignment to the in-school alternative program.

Length of assignment varied according to student needs. In the large district where two of the three full time programs were found, the average assignment, according to data from the student records review, was three days, with a range of two to five days, at the high school site; at the junior high school site the average assignment was just over two days with a one to five day range. However, in the interviews one student reported having spent six weeks in the program. Out-of-school suspensions at these same buildings averaged three days.

The third full-time site showed an average assignment of six days, again based on record review data. The range of assignments was one to ten days. Out-of-school suspensions again averaged three days.

The two part-time programs were both in the same district. One building used the program primarily for academic remediation, principally in the form of reading instruction. Referrals were usually made at the beginning of each semester and the students came to the program for one 45 minute period each day. Disciplinary referrals were also made, again on a period by period basis. These latter students were, for the most part, left to their own devices in the class and either did school work or personal reading. The only expectation for them appeared to be that they not disturb the learning process. Assignment of remedial students usually lasted one semester with the option of a second semester assignment if needed. Disciplinary referrals lasted, on the average, 5 days.

At the second site, the daily period schedule was somewhat unique. Each period wss 93 minutes long. Students, therefore, only attended class in a given subject area, including the in-school alternative when assigned, every other day. Duration of assignment ranged from 8 to 58 days in the sample of students who participated in the program during the 1977-78 school year. The average was 34 days. If a student were attending the program on a full time basis, this would translate into an average stay of 8.5 days. The average out-of-school suspension was three days.

Two interesting problems surfaced with respect to this last program. The first dealt with what class to remove the student from so that he/she might attend the in-school alternative. It appeared that the preference was to remove students from electives (art, music, etc.) rather than basic skills or academic subjects, even if these classes were the ones in which the student was having the problem which led to his/her assignment to the in-school alternative.

The second issue was whether to assign the student to the same teacher with whom a problem had occurred after his/her release from the program. This building resolved the problem by informally identifying a small cadre of teachers willing to take students from the program.

A typical period in the program began with the students writing in their journals for 10 to 15 minutes. They could record in the journal anything significant which happened to them since the last class. They had the option of sharing this information with the program staff member, who might then use the information as the basis for a brief one-to-one counseling session.

This was followed by work on a values/personal development curriculum. The students worked from individual materials at their own pace. The curricular material was selected by the program staff person and was not part of a district-wide curriculum. After a short break, the students were then allowed to spend the rest of the period on homework for regular classes. Assignments were not, as a rule, sent down for that class which the student missed as a result of being assigned to the in-school alternative program. Students in a number of the sites commented that assignment to the in-school alternative program gave them an opportunity, many for the first time since coming to school, to catch up on their academic work.

Grades were assigned for work and participation in the in-school alternative program. These were combined with the student's regular grades. The program staff person often circulated requests for progress reports from regular classroom teachers and worked with individual students for whom deficiencies were noted.

One additionally interesting note about this particular junior high school site was its "two-tiered" program. In addition to the in-school alternative program, there was also a holding room. If a student committed a disciplinary infraction in the regular classroom he or she might be immediately sent to this holding room for the remainder of the school day. The offense was noted on the student's record card. It was only when a pattern of offenses emerged or when a specific, serious problem occurred, that a student was considered for assignment to the in-school alternative program.

The final category of "no formal program" was confined to one district. Here assignment to the program occurred mainly at the beginning of each semester and lasted as long as it was considered beneficial to the student. The program was totally counseling. Sessions between the program counselor-interns and students occurred:

- when the student requested it; or
- when a problem came to the counselor-intern's attention.

In addition to their own skills, the counselor interns were able to call on the resources of the regular guidance counseling staff. One particular strength of the program was its focus on working with parents and with students outside of school, in addition to in-school activities.

Class size varied as a function of program type. In the full-time program the maximum class size was 20 students. None of these programs appeared to have any problem staying within this limit. The part-time programs tried to limit each period to no more than 15 students. Again, it appears that this was a realistic level. The one-to-one counseling programs noted a load of 180+ students during the 1977-78 school year. However, there were no established limits on the number of students who might be served. During our interviews at this last site, however, it was suggested that the above figure represented something of a maximum service level.

Program Follow-Up and Evaluation

None of the programs visited had any systematic, formal procedure for follow-up on students leaving the in-school alternative program. A good number of students maintained personal contact with program staff on their own.

Repeat assignments to the in-school alternative, based on the 1977-1978 school year sample data, are as follows:

		% Repeat
District 1	Junior High Senior High	30% 0%
District 2	Elementary School Junior High	No Data 10%
District 3	Middle School	No Data No Data
District 4	Senior High	0%

A somewhat higher recidivism rate was suggested in interviews with program staff.

As has already been stated, program evaluation is not a regular component of any of the programs. Three of the four districts had, however, developed some form of descriptive annual report on a building or district basis. What made evaluation difficult is the absence of specific and meaningful program objectives for the in-school alternative. Where objectives were stated they were often taken verbatim from prior year proposals or other planning documents.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

In the Records Review component of the study, information was sought on the following characteristics of students in the three samples:

- Age*
- Grade Level*
- Promotion
- Sex*
- Race*
- Grades*
- Conduct Marks*
- Attendance*
- Academic Tracking
- Out of School Suspensions (if appropriate)*
- Assignment to the In-School Alternative (if appropriate)*
- Other Disciplinary Infractions
- Contact with Parents
- Parent Involvement in School Activities

Usable responses in sufficient volume were received for those categories that are noted by an asterisk. The attributes of suspension and of assignment to the in-school alternative program have already been discussed. This section will summarize findings about the first six categories above. Individual contingency tables for each variable are found in the district case studies.

Table IV-2 below summarizes the form in which data was reported on the student Record Review forms. The numbers in parenthesis after each letter indicate the number of categories of each data element which were used in the analysis that follows. It was most often necessary to combine racial categories because of expected frequencies less than five. Those instances where only one category is indicated apply to two schools, one where the population was over 98 percent Black and one where it was over 98 percent White.

Chi square (χ^2) values were computed for the following cor ngency tables:

- Grade level by sample group (i.e., assigned to the in-school alternative program, suspended out-of-school, neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative program).
- Sex by sample group.
- Race by sample group.
- Sample group by grades (in two cases).
- Sample group by conduct (in four cases).

Chi square (χ^2) values for each of the above contingency tables are reported in tables IV-3 through IV-7 below. Also reported are the degrees of freedom for each table, as well as values for lambda (λ) and tau (T), both measures of variable association.

TABLE 3

FORM IN WHICH DATA WAS REPORTED

		Data Elements						
		Group	Grade Level	Sex	Race	Grades	Conduct	Attendance
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	N(3)	N(3)	N(2)	N(3)	I	O(4)	R
	Senior High	N(3)	N(3)	N(2)	N(1)	I	O(3)	R
DISTRICT 2	Elementary	N(2)	N(2)	N(2)	N(2)	O(4)	O(4)	R
	Junior High	N(3)	N(3)	N(2)	N(4)	I	O(4)	R
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	N(3)	N(3)	N(2)	N(2)	O(4)	ND	R
	Senior High	N(3)	N(3)	N(2)	N(2)	ND	ND	R
DISTRICT 4	Senior High	N(3)	N(3)	N(2)	N(1)	I	ND	R

N = Nominal Data
O = Ordinal Data
I = Interval Data
R = Ratio Data
ND = No Data Reported
( ) = Number of categories

TABLE 4

GRADE LEVEL BY SAMPLE GROUP

		df	X_2	λ_y	λ_x	T_y	T_x
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	4	16.58*	-	-	.028	.028
	Senior High	4	48.25*	.24	.19	-	-
DISTRICT 2	Elementary	2	143.50*	.4	.61	-	-
	Junior High	4	35.35*	.165	.053	-	-
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	4	8.64*	.115	.041	-	-
	Senior High	4	31.18*	.15	.15	-	-
DISTRICT 4	Senior High	4	72.42*	.255	.019	-	-

* $p < .05$

TABLE 5

SEX BY SAMPLE GROUP

		df	X_2	λ_y	λ_x	T_y	T_x
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	2	1.97	-	-	-	-
	Senior High	2	38.05*	.19	.288	-	-
DISTRICT 2	Elementary	2	28.56*	-	-	.13	.095
	Junior High	2	16.19*	.14	.14	-	-
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	2	64.81*	.24	-	.217	.085
	Senior High	2	69.03*	.255	.207	-	-
DISTRICT 4	Senior High	2	75.04*	.3	.3	-	-

*$p < .05$

TABLE 6
RACE BY SAMPLE GROUP

		df	χ^2	λ_y	λ_x	T_y	T_x
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	4	35.73	-	-	.059	.044
	Senior High		1/	-	-	-	-
DISTRICT 2	Elementary	4	112.41	-	-	.184	.124
	Junior High	6	112.97	.35	.16	-	-
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	2	60.12	.24	.179	-	-
	Senior High	2	72.14	.3	.405	-	-
DISTRICT 4	Senior High		2/	-	-	-	-

* $p < .05$

1 The senior high school site in District 1 had a student population approximately ninety-eight percent of which was black.

2 The senior high in District 4 had a student population approximately ninety-eight percent of which was white.

TABLE 7

SAMPLE GROUP BY GRADES

		df	χ^2	λ_y	λ_x	T_y	T_x
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	-	NA	-	-	-	-
	Senior High	-	NA	-	-	-	-
DISTRICT 2	Elementary	4	70.04	-	-	.073	.116
	Junior High	-	NA	-	-	-	-
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	6	26.97	.074	.135	-	-
	Senior High	-	ND	-	-	-	-
DISTRICT 4	Senior High	-	NA	-	-	-	-

* $p < .05$

TABLE 8

SAMPLE GROUP BY CONDUCT MARKS

		df	χ^2	λ_y	λ_x	T_y	T_x
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	6	49.4	.056	.235	-	-
	Senior High	4	20.95	-	-	.0275	.0346
DISTRICT 2	Elementary	4	83.32	-	-	.116	.137
	Junior High	6	111.28	.14	.285	-	-
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	-	ND	-	-	-	-
	Senior High	-	ND	-	-	-	-
DISTRICT 4	Senior High	-	ND	-	-	-	-

* $p < .05$

All but one of the χ^2 values demonstrated significance, and thus a dependent relationship between the two variables, at the .05 level or below. However, in considering the magnitude of the χ^2 value one must allow for the effect of percentaging the contingency tables, which effectively increased the cell sizes and overall N (but maintained the proportional relationship among cells).

The more meaningful statistics reported above are the values for lambda (λ) and tau (T) which give an indicator of the degree of association between the two variables in a contingency table. As has already been stated, both are proportional-reduction-in error (PRE) measures. They indicate the reduction in error in predicting one variable from the other.

In Table IV-5 for example, we see that knowledge of a student's race at the junior high school in District 2 results in a 35 percent reduction in error in predicting the category (i.e. assigned to the in-school alternative, suspended out of school, neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative program) to which a student will belong. Knowledge of the category of membership, on the other hand, results in a 16 percent reduction in error in predicting student race, based on the sample drawn. As a rule, race is more highly associated with category membership in Table IV-5 than the cowerse which occurs only in one instance, the Senior High in District 3. In all tables the first variable in the Table heading is the X variable and the second is the Y variable.

The limits of both λ and T are 0 and 1.0, with a value of 0 indicating independence of X and Y; 1.0 occurs when the variables are completely related. A lambda value of 0 can be obtained when the modal class of a variable is so large relative to other frequencies that all maximum values are in the same column or row. Tau was used when such a condition occurred in our tables.

A caution in the use of these associative indices is found in Reynolds (1977).

> ... Measures of association by themselves do not prove the relative explanatory power of variables ... the impact of one variable on another depends partly on its relationship to still other variables, many of which may be unmeasured. (p.50)

Reynolds then goes on to state that using a coefficient of association alone to show explanatory importance seems a questionable practice.

No such claims are made for the λ and T values reported above. The asymetric measures were computed to give an initial idea of the magnitude of association of the variables and to see if any variable(s) emerge as possible predictors around which future, more focused systematic research might be built.

TABLE 9 below is a frequency distribution of λ and T values.

Table IV-8
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF λ AND T VALUES

PRE measure / f	λ_y	λ_x	T_y	T_x
.01 - .049	0	2	2	3
.050 - .099	2	1	2	3
.10 - .19	6	6	3	2
.20 - .29	4	4	1	0
.30 - .39	3	1	0	0
.40 - .49	1	1	0	0
.50 and above	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	16	16	8	8

Close to 75 percent of the lambda values fall below .30; all but one of the tau values fall below .20. In the former instance, this would tend to indicate a moderate relationship between the variables identified in Tables IV-3 through IV-7. Values for tau appear to show weak to moderate variable relationships.

Prior to an analysis, based on the literature reviewed, it was hypothesized that:

- Grade level will influence assignment to either out-of-school suspension or the in-school alternative program, with students at the lower secondary grades (e.g. grades 7 through 9) having higher suspension rates than those in higher grades (e.g. grades 11 and 12).
- A student's sex will influence assignment to either out-of-school suspension or the in-school alternative to suspension. A Childrens Defense Fund study (1975) indicated that male students appeared more likely than female students suspended out of school (p. 61).

- A student's race will influence assignment to either out-of-school suspension or the in-school alternative to suspension. Again, the CDF study made a case, based on Office for Civil Rights data for 1972-73, that non-white students are disproportionately suspended out of school (p. 61 and Chapter 4).

- Participation in a particular group (i.e. assigned to the in-school alternative program) will influence a student's academic grades.

- Participation in a particular group will influence a student's attendance.

- Participation in a particular group will influence a student's conduct mark.

Inspection of the individual building values for λ and T do not consistently support the above assumptions. In Table IV-3, four of the seven building values show that knowldege of grade level reduces error in predicting sample group by between 2.8 percent and 40 percent. However, the reverse -- knowledge of sample group reduces error in predicting grade level -- ranges between 2.8 percent and 61 percent.

In addition to nominal/ordinal data, two of the study variables were reported in interval (grade point average) and ratio (attendance) form. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to these data. Alpha was again set at the .05 level. Where significant F's were secured, mean pair relations were further examined using the Scheffe method of multiple comparisons. This method is used to uncover the groups contributing to the significant F. Four contrasts were tested for each significant F:

- A - S
- A - N
- S - N
- A & S - N

where

A = Students assigned to the in-school alternative program
S = Students suspended out of school
N = Students neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative

Table IV-9 reports the obtained F ratios for each variable -- grades and attendance -- by building. All F's were significant except that relating to attendance at the middle school in District 3. Beyond permitting rejection of the null hypothesis of equal population means, a significant F statistic is not very informative. Post hoc comparisons, such as the Scheffe test, permit further analysis of the component means to determine those pairs which contributed to significant F. Table IV-10 presents values for the four contrasts for each relevant variable and building site. A finding of significance in a contrast leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis that a given contrast is zero.

As can be seen from Table IV-10, all contrasts between means for students suspended out-of-school(s) are significantly different from means for students neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative program (N). The same is true when means for students assigned to the in-school alternative (A) or suspended (S) are contrased with values for N.

In contrasting A with S, four of nine pairs do not differ. The same is true of contrasts between A and N, but interestingly not on the same variables. Assuming that there is a beneficial effect of the in-school alternative program, one would have expected a higher number of significant contrasts, particularly between A and S.

TABLE 10

F-RATIOS FOR GRADES AND
ATTENDANCE BY DISTRICT

District	Building	Variable	F	df
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	Grades	7.314*	2, 71
		Attendance	6.67*	2,144
	Senior High	Grades	17.36*	2, 65
		Attendance	10.04*	2, 140
DISTRICT 2	Elementary		N/A	
	Junior High	Grades	130.79*	2, 109
		Attendance	16.16*	2, 115
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	Attendance	.773	2, 117
	High School	Attendance	20.52	2, 117
DISTRICT 4	High School	Grades	39.82*	2, 113
		Attendance	8.5*	2, 113

* $p < .05$

TABLE 11

MEAN CONTRASTS BY BUILDING

District	Building	Variable	Contrasts				Critical Value
			A-S	A-N	S-N	[A+S] - N	
DISTRICT 1	Junior High	Grades	.1081	-2.5474*	-3.7002*	-3.6473	+/-2.502
		Attendance	-2.6984*	.8506	3.5466	2.5385	+/-2.4698
	Senior High	Grades	2.139	-2.859*	-6.029	-5.065	+/-2.5010
		Attendance	-2.245	1.3193	4.4818	3.8521*	+/-2.4739
DISTRICT 2	Elementary		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Junior High	Grades	-8.904	15.9332*	7.817*	14.8276	+/-2.4738
		Attendance	1.6237	5.0725*	3.994*	5.4419	+/-2.4779
DISTRICT 3	Middle School	Attendance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Senior High	Attendance	-3.8739*	2.4824	6.3563	5.1030	+/-2.4779
DISTRICT 4	Senior High	Grades	5.068*	-2.002	-8.5729*	-6.1273	+/-2.4779
		Attendance	-2.8365*	1.4293	4.0712*	3.1888*	+/-2.4779

* $p < .05$
A - Assigned to the in-school alternative
S - Suspended out of school
N - Neither suspended nor assigned to the in-school alternative

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- While a critical review of project findings is presented in the preceding chapter it is not meant to imply that one particular district or building program is superior to another. Each program is a response to a somewhat unique set of site specific circumstances. Comparisons are intended to alert the reader to a point which the authors feel is significant in the conceptualization and/or implementation of an in-school alternative program.

- A similar point can be made in relation to data reported from the student record review, particularly the impact data. Again, we are not so much concerned with inherent program worth as we are with the identification of hypotheses and more precise research questions which might be explored in future studies.

- The programs selected for study in this project, while having the provision of an alternative to suspension as one objective, are all multifaceted. Although reduction of out-of-school suspensions was given as a major reason for program development in all four districts, all still suspend students. Further, the programs are charged with preventing problems which lead to suspension as much as they are seen as an alternative to such suspension.

  We are, therefore, looking at programs which do not always meet the generic definition of an in-school alternative to suspension; that is, a program to which students are referred in lieu of suspension from school or for accumulating offenses which may lead to suspension.

- In-school alternative programs studied served more than just students who were referred in lieu of out-of-school suspension. It was not possible to isolate this subgroup in constructing the sampling frame for in-school alternative program participants. It is likely that the data generated by this sample is not completely representative of students for whom the target programs served as alternatives to out-of-school suspension.

- The building programs selected for study, particulary in the two large urban districts visited, were, one must assume, purposively selected. They represented in the minds of district staff both the best examples of the program operating in the district and/or the sites which best met the stated study objectives. We do not present either the districts or buildings visited in the first year of this study as examples of outstanding practice. They do, however, represent established programs that appear to be meeting district and building level needs.

- While it is assumed that the individuals responsible for the records review did follow the instructions and draw random samples, the same assumption of random selection cannot be inferred in the choice of teachers, participating and non-participating students with whom the project staff met. This fact, plus the small numbers contacted in each of these groups, argues against any generalizations drawn from the interview data reported.

- The four sites selected are not presented as representative of the total range of in-school alternative programs. There are other types of alternatives which this study did not include, but which might be equally appropriate in a district contemplating the installation of such a program.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the questions which remains unresolved as a result of the first year's research is the impact of in-school alternatives to suspension on the out-of-school suspension rate. A questionnaire is being mailed in March to secure information on in-school alternative programs for inclusion in a program directory. It will go to a purposive sample of approximately 500 school districts in the United States. It should be possible to more precisely determine from questionnaire responses the impact of the alternative program on out-of-school suspensions. This assumes, however, that the districts have the data to report.

Absence of this data--and our first year field experience suggests that the quality of discipline related data is generally poor--would suggest a broader based research concern over why this condition exists.

Based on the current research and the apparent high level of diversity among in-school alternative programs, it would appear that the focus of any future research should remain in individual district. Further, given the quality of quantitative measures on students and student performance, and the inability to control situational and assignment factors the utility of total dependence on post-hoc analyses is questionable.

Ethnographic research provides the best opportunity to capture program process. However, it is expensive to conduct and presents problems of intrusion on the regular school program. Two areas which are definitely recommended for further study are:

- processes for increasing the meaningful involvement of parents in school discipline/suspension; and
- processes for assisting teachers to deal more creatively with discipline related problems.

A final area which might be meaningfully studied is the diffusion of in-school alternative program models. Perhaps the classic case is the Positive Alternative to Student Suspension Program which is disseminated through the National Diffusion Network. From 1977 through 1979, P.A.S.S. had been partially of fully adopted in 29 local education agencies in thirteen states.

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